



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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District of Arizona*

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## **BEE KEEPER INDICTED FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY FRAUD**

PHOENIX – A federal grand jury in Phoenix has returned a one count indictment against Harold W. Pease, 61, of Litchfield Park, Ariz. for a violation of Theft of Public Money. Pease made an initial appearance in U.S. District Court on Friday, July 13.

The indictment alleges that Pease illegally received in excess of \$178,000 between January 1999 to March 2007 from the Social Security Administration for disability benefits for himself and others. The indictment further alleges that he was not eligible for the money because his income from work as a self-employed bee keeper was greater than the maximum amount allowable under the law while receiving disability payments. Pease had recently been featured with a beard of bees in local newspaper articles which indicated that he charged \$150 to remove bees from homes across the metropolitan Phoenix area. Pease entered a not guilty plea at his arraignment and was released on his own recognizance pending a September 5, 2007 trial date before United States District Court Judge David G. Campbell.

A conviction for Theft of Public Money carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both. In the event of a conviction, Judge Campbell will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining the actual sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Office of the Inspector General, Social Security Administration. The prosecution is being handled by Richard I. Mesh, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-757-01-PHX-DGC  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-163(Pease)

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